

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 16, 2007

The Honorable John P. Murtha  
Chairman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense  
H-149 Capitol Building  
Building Washington, DC 20515-6018

The Honorable C.W. Bill Young  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Defense  
1016 Longworth House Office  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Murtha and Ranking Member Young:

The undersigned members of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force, and others, respectfully request that \$19.5 million be appropriated for the Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center (DVBIC) and its 9 sites<sup>1</sup> in the Defense Appropriations Bill for Fiscal Year 2008.

As you know, traumatic brain injury (TBI) has become the signature wound of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. As many in the news media have explained, Bob Woodruff's story is a great example, TBI is a complex condition that requires a full spectrum of specialized care. Since 1992, the DVBIC (formerly the Defense and Veterans Head Injury Program), has coordinated care for our troops from the battlefield to the community. Over the years, DVBIC has researched and treated TBI and improved the state of the art medical treatment. The numbers of injured troops with TBI, however, is higher than ever expected. Service personnel are not just sustaining TBIs of the magnitude of Woodruff's but also through the concussive forces of IEDs which are not always apparent. More effort needs to be put towards evaluating our troops and identifying their injuries earlier so specialized care can be coordinated.

The \$19.5 million represents a \$12.5 million plus up from the \$7 million in the DoD budget. This funding is needed to improve evaluation and screening tools, expand outreach with educational, vocational and family support information, maintain the TBI registry and data bank, continue TBI research and provide state of the art rehabilitation to the most severely injured. Specialized neuro-rehabilitation is needed for the forgotten wounded, those with severe TBI resulting in minimal consciousness or the vegetative state. \$3 million would be used to establish Project Hope, an effort to care for 12 troops who because of the severity of their injuries would not get rehabilitation otherwise.

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<sup>1</sup> Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Washington, DC; Laurel Highlands Neuro-Rehabilitation Center, Johnstown, PA; James A. Haley Veterans Hospital, Tampa, FL; Naval Medical Center San Diego, San Diego, CA; Minneapolis Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Minneapolis, MN; Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System, Palo Alto, CA; Virginia Neurocare, Inc., Charlottesville, VA; Hunter McGuire Veterans Affairs Medical Center, Richmond, VA; Wilford Hall Medical Center, Lackland Air Force Base, TX.

We must ensure that our troops do not fall through the cracks and are given every possible opportunity for the best medical care, rehabilitation and community reentry assistance that we as a nation can provide.

Thank you for your consideration of this request to help serve our troops.

Sincerely,

Bill Russell Jr.

Todd R. Platts

Dennis J. Knick

Wendy S. Sinding

Frank Smith

Carol S. Sz

Don A. Wapner

Donald M. Payne

Don Long

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John A. L. Bunch

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